

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2233
INFO AMCONSUL LENINGRAD
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 19759

EXDIS

TEL AVIV FOR AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, UR
SUBJECT: MOSCOW JEWS PLAN DEMONSTRATION ON ANNIVERSARY OF LENINGRAD
HIJACKING.

REF: 75 MOSCOW 18413

1. SEVERAL MOSCOW JEWISH DISSIDENTS HAVE TOLD US OF A PLAN TO ORGANIZE A PEACEFUL DEMONSTRATION ON DECEMBER 24, THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE "LENINGRAD HIJACKING" AFFAIR OF 1970. LAST YEAR, THE COMMEMORATION TOOK THE FORM OF A "STAND-IN" ON THE STEPS OF THE LENIN LIBRARY (REFTEL). SOME TWENTY JEWS, NONE OF WHOM CARRIED BANNERS OR SPOKE, STOOD ON THE LIBRARY STEPS, SURROUNDED BY AN EQUAL NUMBER OF POLICE, BOTH IN UNIFORM AND NOT, FOR ABOUT TEN MINUTES. AN ADDITIONAL SIX OR EIGHT JEWS WHO HAD ALSO INTENDED TO APPEAR WERE PREVENTED FROM DOING SO BY THE KGB, MEMBERS OF WHICH CAME TO THEIR HOUSES AND KEPT THEM UNDER HOUSE ARREST FOR THE PERIOD OF THE DEMONSTRATION.

2. THIS YEAR, THE JEWISH ACTIVISTS HOPE TO ORGANIZE A
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PAGE 02 MOSCOW 19759 201125Z

SIMILAR DEMONSTRATION. WE GATHER, HOWEVER, THAT THERE IS SOME DISAGREEMENT WITHIN THE COMMUNITY AS TO WHETHER SUCH A DEMONSTRATION IS WISE AT THIS TIME. SOME PESSIMISTS TAKE THE LINE THAT THE RECENT SIT-IN AT THE SUPREME SOVIET (MOSCOW 16759 AND PREVIOUS) AND THE PLANNED CULTURAL AFFAIRS SYMPOSIUM (MOSCOW 19676 AND PREVIOUS) HAVE PUSHED

THE AUTHORITIES AS FAR AS IS WISE. SOME OF THE PESSIMISTS, ASSUMING THAT THEY WILL BE DETAINED DURING THE PERIOD OF THE SYMPOSIUM (DECEMBER 21-23) EVEN TAKE THE LINE THAT THEY WILL SIMPLY BE KEPT IN PRISON FOR AN EXTRA DAY. ON THIS LINE OF REASONING, A POORLY-ATTENDED DEMONSTRATION WOULD BE WORSE THAN NONE AT ALL; THUS, IT MIGHT BE BETTER TO LET THIS YEAR GO UNOBSERVED.

3. COMMENT. WHATEVER THE FORCE OF THE PESSIMISTS' CASE, IT SEEMS UNLIKELY THAT THE MOSCOW DISSIDENT JEWS WILL LET THE OPPORTUNITY GO BY. THEY FEEL THAT THE IMPORTANCE OF PRECEDENT IS SUCH THAT THEY CANNOT AFFORD NOT TO HOLD THEIR DEMONSTRATION, AND IT IS A GOOD BET, UNLESS MOSCOW'S ENTIRE DISSIDENT JEWISH COMMUNITY IS INDEED INCARCERATED, THAT THERE WILL BE SOME SORT OF DEMONSTRATION ON THE 24TH. MATLOCK

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